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CITY NEWS

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Serving New Jersey's African-American Communities Since 1983

December 18 - December 24, 1996

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TREASURY DEPARTMENT PENALIZES OFFICIALS FOR RACIST INVOLVEMENTS

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Treasury Department's action against federal employees attending "Good Ol' Boy Roundups" in East Tennessee is weak and deserves attention from President Clinton, says one black leader.

In a report issued last week, the department suspended five federal employees without pay for one to 30 days and took milder action against 24 others for attending camping parties on the Ocoee River where racist activity occurred.

However, Dewey Roberts, president of the Knoxville chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, told *The Knoxville News-Sentinel* he didn't think the disciplinary action was strong enough and is turning to Clinton.

"It is so important at this juncture that President Clinton take some strong sort of measures to try to help diffuse some of the racial tension that is in this country," Roberts said. "By Treasury and Justice having such weak actions or reactions certainly does not help the racial problems in this country."

Among the racist actions at one or more outings, protesters found, was an entrance sign saying "Nigger Checkpoint," sales of T-shirts with racist wording or images, skills with racist themes—such as pulling a black doll out of a watermelon—and insulting remarks that were made to the few blacks who attended.

The department's action follows an earlier decision by the Department of Justice to suspend one FBI agent for five days without pay for attending one of the annual outings and making a comment to another agent that could be construed as racist.

Ray Kelly, undersecretary of Treasury and a former New York City police commissioner, said the Treasury Department's decision was "appropriate" considering no evidence was found that any federal employee was involved in racist conduct at the events.

BENNETT SAYS MCA VIOLATES COMMITMENT ON GANGSTA RAP

by Melissa B. Robinson

WASHINGTON (AP)—William Bennett, Republican conservative voice on issues of morality, is accusing MCA Inc. of violating a commitment not to distribute profane or violent music.

Bennett, who is a former education secretary, Sen. Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., and C. DeLores Tucker of the National Political Congress of Black Women planned to outline their case against MCA Tuesday.

When *Intersect* Records—the label behind some of music's most controversial rappers—moved to MCA in February, MCA officials said they "would not profit from or distribute music they found offensive," said Bennett's aide, Christine Pinkston.

But so far, MCA has failed to live up to that commitment, according to Bennett, Lieberman and Tucker, who have teamed up before to criticize "gangsta" rap and other music containing violent and sexually explicit lyrics.

MCA's acquisition—a deal valued at \$200 million—came after Time Warner Inc. dropped its *Intersect* stake in September 1995 in the midst of attacks over explicit lyrics.

Educators launch reforms

Lack of funding threatens to derail improvements

by Ron L. Holland

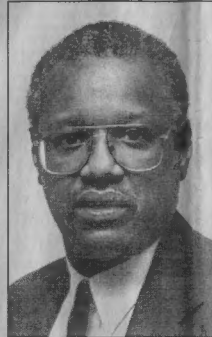
NEW JERSEY—While legislators, education officials and the governor continue to wrangle over partisan strategies to equalize educational opportunities before a court mandated December 31 deadline, local district Superintendents have mounted their own campaign to address the instructional needs of more than 1.2 million of the state's public school students.

Nearly all of the 594 districts have either implemented district specific referendums, or have coordinated efforts with their neighbors to improve the quality of education.

Despite a consistent theme of lack in state funding for particular programs, innovative partnerships have been formulated to provide additional resources, and implement tangible programs for improved performance.

Take for instance the district of Asbury Park. The city's 3,200 students benefit from a reading program that not only helps improve their reading and writing skills, but their comprehension skills as well.

"We have implemented a holistic



East Orange Superintendent Dr. Howard

reading program called "Success for All" which comes from Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore," said As-

sistant District Superintendent Robert Mann.

"Basically this is a holistic approach in which kids are taught to read and write through strategies that address all facades and learning modalities."

Mann said the district has also implemented the "Professor B" and "World Lab Program" among others, that help students conceptualize math and address science and social studies issues.

"More recently, Johns Hopkins University was visiting our district to evaluate or assess how we're implementing the program. And while sitting in some of the classes, teachers were openly expressing their desire to continue the program because they've experienced progress from the students," Mann said.

The Trenton Public School district has also introduced innovative programs to educate more than 13,000 students from kindergarten to adult education.



Trenton Superintendent Dr. Venable

According to District Superintendent Bernice Proctor Venable, there were only 17 full-day kindergarten

classes in the 1990-91 school year. "As of last year, we had 64, 65 full-day kindergarten classes," The Trenton district also adopted the innovative California based "Year-Round Education" program, which was designed to lengthen the instructional hours of the school day and year.

"We take the leadership with (YRE) said Venable in a telephone interview. We're the only district in the state of New Jersey that has a bonafide program. I just met with the outside evaluators, and they're telling me that it is a stellar program."

Of the 500 children that registered from the Kilmer and Mott Elementary schools, the YRE program, has marked improvements that were measured by standardized testing. There is also increased staff and student attendance.

See DILEMMA/page 4

School funding debate heats up

by Myra A. Thomas



Orange Superintendent Dr. Salley

children in the Abbott case, the Governor's funding proposal, if passed, would be immediately challenged in court.

Jayne Rebovich, Deputy Press Secretary for Governor Whitman, said, "The Governor believes that she has put together a plan that is constitutionally sound." Rebovich noted that the Governor completely disagreed with the contention that her funding proposal was antithetical to the Abbott ruling.

Steve Block, a lawyer with the Education Law Center and director of special projects, believes that the proposal does come in direct conflict with the heart of Abbott. "The funding proposal institutionalizes inequality," said Block.

The Governor's core curriculum standards vary, depending on the grade level. However, students graduating the fourth grade must be able to demonstrate a proficiency in basic mathematical operations and concepts, minimal proficiency in a foreign language, and knowledge of major periods in U.S. history—among other things.

Graduates from eighth grade must be able to use computers to complete assignments, conduct science experiments, prepare oral and written presentations, and other more critical types of thinking assignments. A graduating senior must develop an individual career plan, evaluate the influence of the U.S. Constitution, read and speak with fluency in a foreign language, and demonstrate other more analytical types of work.

Some urban educators have voiced the very obvious concern that successful implementation of the new more stringent core curriculum standards would require an even more substantial investment on the part of the state—more dollars to realign districts that are sometimes seeking just to bring kids up to the prior more minimum standards.

Dr. Bernice Proctor Venable, superintendent of Trenton public schools, said, "Many of the urban districts may not be able to accomplish these things. Many of the urban centers don't have science laboratories to carry out what's going to have to be carried out in order to reach the new standards."

Venable cited three previous years of level funding from the state

See FUNDING DEBATE/page 10

Sports Legends convene in Newark



Gathered at the annual New York World City Sports Legends event are: From left, standing: Larry Brown, Washington Redskins; Jim Marshall and Carl Eller, Minnesota Vikings; Jim Washington, Atlanta Hawks; Harry Carson and Bob Taylor, New York Giants; Nicholas Bowkinkel, heavyweight wrestling champion; Arnold Field, San Diego Chargers; Nick Hudson, Atlanta Hawks; John Gamble, Detroit Lions; Dick Jonckowski, sports announcer; Sauty Stephens, Kansas City Chiefs; Stu Vought, Minnesota Vikings; John Gilliam, New Orleans Saints. From left, seated: Bobby Reed, Minnesota Vikings; Bobby Bell, Kansas City Chiefs; Hall of Fame; Yvon Gagne, heavyweight wrestling champion; Oscar Reed, Minnesota Vikings; Milton Harrison, president of Newark YMCA; Carol Blazewski, New Jersey Giants; Bill Grant, Mr. America/Mr. World; Chuck Foreman, Minnesota Vikings.

See story on page 5

Legislators defend affirmative action

by Ron L. Holland

TRENTON—Members of the Assembly continue to denounce a proposed bill that would repeal the state's Affirmative Action laws. Assemblyman Tom Smith (R-Monmouth) is strongly against the measure and plans to fight any attempt to legislate the proposal.

"Throughout my legislative career, I have always been a strong advocate for affirmative action initiatives," said Smith in a statement sent to *City News*. "This proposed measure stands against everything I believe in. I will continue to serve as a strong advocate for affirmative action by working to get this introduced to this legislature."

The proposal was first introduced to the Assembly by Morris County Conservative Michael Carroll (R) and Kevin O'Toole. Carroll said the proposal is modeled after the California initiative "Proposition 209" which is currently facing a court challenge. The bill (A-5233) would in effect bar the state from awarding jobs or contracts based on "race, ethnicity, sex, color or national origin."

"I plan to fight this aggressively, vigorously, and tirelessly," said Assemblywoman Nia Gill (D-Essex). "This would be devastating. The initiative would not only preclude state

agencies, but private business from participating in any Affirmative Action program."

Gill, who came out strongly when the bill was proposed, said that all learning institutions funded by the state and non-profit organizations would be greatly effected if the bill were to pass.

"This is a battle for ideas, that is why they use the word quota in the bill. Knowing full well New Jersey doesn't apply quotas, that is a buzz word to conjure up certain images and used to divide us."

Assemblyman Smith, who serves as the Republican Majority Whip, said that his republican colleagues record is clear on their legislative efforts relating to affirmative action. Smith said that these laws were enacted to ensure minority businesses remain competitive in the bidding for state contracts, as well as creating measures to revitalize cities such as the urban enterprise initiatives.

Governor Christine Whitman has made it clear that she would not sup-



Assemblyman Tom Smith

port any effort to repeal the state's affirmative action laws. "I don't think that bill would ever reach my desk. I don't think the bill will get through the assembly," Whitman said at a recent Governor's Economic Conference on Women.

"Everyone knows where I stand on affirmative action. I've taken some very strong steps through executive orders to expand the playing field. I don't look on affirmative action as quotas, it's opportunity and I'm committed to that."

Got news? We want to hear it. Call us at 908-754-3400 or fax story ideas in to 908-753-1036

Community Calendar

THRU DECEMBER 27
WOODBIDGE—The Barron Arts Center will host an exhibition entitled "Trains, Tricycles and Tracks," a display of model trains curated by Michael Gelfand. For more info call 908-334-0413.

THRU DECEMBER 15
JERSEY CITY—Learn to make long lasting outdoor decorations and table centerpieces from fresh greens. Hudson County Community College from 4-6 p.m. For class info call 201-714-2107.

DECEMBER 15
OXFORD—The New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism welcomes all to a Christmas Past, at Shippen Manor, a Georgian manor house decorated with 18th and 19th century holiday decorations. For more info call 1-800-JERSEY-7.

DECEMBER 17 - 18
EAST ORANGE—The Secrets of Home Buying, a free seminar hosted by the NAACP, E.O. Local Assistance Board and Midland PNC Bank. 6 p.m. at 7 Glenwood Ave. Seating is limited. Call 201-296-1225.

THRU DECEMBER 19
Green Brook—The Greenbrook Manor Nursing and Rehabilitation Center will sponsor a gift-giving program. The center can drop off a gift for an elderly resident or purchase a special gift for under \$10 and give to a select resident. For more info, call (908)968-5500.

DECEMBER 19
Neptune—The American Legion, post No. 205 will have its annual Christmas Party at 9:00pm only. For members only.

DECEMBER 19-22
JERSEY CITY—The New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism announces that the CASE Museum will host their annual Chanukah and Christmas Card Fair. Also, works of artists from the Soviet Union will be featured. For more info call 1-800-JERSEY-7.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20
PATERSON—Women of Wisdom presents the 2nd Annual Wisdom Jam, 9 p.m. until at the Masonic Temple Ballroom, 224 Broadway. Special gift for the first 25 people. For more info call 201-345-1783.

DECEMBER 21
Neptune—The American Legion, Post 205 will hold its annual Christmas Party for children up to the age of 10. From 2:00 to 5:00pm toy food, soda and candy will be given to each child. Santa will visit by fire truck and give toys.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21
LINCROFT/NYC—The Monmouth County Park System has scheduled a trip to the Paramount Theater at Madison Square Garden in NYC, to see "A Christmas Carol." Attendees will leave from Thompson Park, Newman Springs Road, at 9 am and return around 4:30 pm. Pre-registration is required. For more info call 908-842-0030.

THROUGH DECEMBER 23
JERSEY CITY—Jersey City State College will offer "Using the Internet in Education." For more info call 201-200-3413.

DECEMBER 23-24
NEWARK—Kwanzaa Holiday Expo at the Newark Symphony Hall Terrace Ball Room. For Tickets and vending space call 908-755-0625 or 201-624-2105.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25
NEW YORK, NEW YORK—Covenant House New York sponsors free Holiday meals for the homeless at Times Square, 460 West 41st Street from 1:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. For more info call 212-613-0300.

THROUGH DECEMBER 31
MONTCLAIR—The Montclair Art Museum's American and Native American collections will be on display in "Relecting America: Highlights from the Permanent Collection." For more info, call 201-746-5555.

PEOPLE Prince Wooten honored by GSABJ



Prince Wooten was honored for his work as an executive producer of public affairs television and radio programming by the Garden State Association of Black Journalists. Wooten received the 1996 Journalism Award in the category of Impact Journalism for his program Another View: The Future of Affirmative Action, which airs on PBS throughout New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York. Throughout his career, Wooten has earned numerous honors, locally, and nationally including an Emmy Award and eight Emmy nominations, a Gabriel Award, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Silver Award, A Communications Excellence to Black Audiences Award and a Tri-state Catholic Committee on Radio and Television Award. GSABJ Awards recognize ground breaking journalism that has made a positive difference in the African-American community.



Members of the Advisory Board of Devereux Deerehaven in Chester work hard to make the future brighter for the 70 girls and young women, aged 8 to 21, who live at the residential treatment center. Many of these girls have been abandoned, neglected or abused. Reviewing some of the materials for the Devereux Deerehaven Annual Fund Drive are, from left, Ethel G. Bates of South Orange, a member of the Devereux Deerehaven Advisory Board; Lynn Jones of California, executive director of Devereux Deerehaven; and Migdalia Rodriguez Cardia of Stanhope, a member of the Devereux Deerehaven Advisory Board.

Holiday safety brochures available

IRVINGTON—Holiday safety brochures are available from Irvington Councilman Craig Stanley to help prevent accidents during the holidays. The brochure has been developed to make families mindful of the dangers that may occur during this time of year and provides tips on how to avoid them. It outlines tips regarding Christmas tree safety, toy safety and home safety for the holidays. To obtain a copy of the brochure, please contact his district office at 201-399-1000.

County offers outreach program for the elderly

UNION COUNTY—Union County's Department of Human Services, Division on Aging, has scheduled its December Outreach Services Program to assist individuals with the necessary appliances for Pharmaceutical Assistance, Gas and Electric Support, SHARE Food Program and Food Stamps, Counseling on Health Insurance for Medicare Enrollees, Home Energy Assistance and Supplemental Security Income. Assistance will be provided on Thursday, December 19, at the Elizabeth Family Center, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at 210 Chestnut St., 2nd floor, Roselle. For additional information on the program call 908-5270-4872.

NBCAR accepting nominations for '96 honorees

The National Black College Alumni Reunion (NBCAR) is currently accepting nominations for the 1997 "Corporate Advisor of the Year" and "Educator of the Year" awards. Nominees should be advocates for historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). To nominate a candidate, submit a two-page type written letter explaining why your nominee should be selected. Deadline for all entries is Friday, January 10. The "Corporate Advisor of the Year" nominee should represent a

major company that has made a significant contribution to a HBCU or assisted students to attend a HBCU.

The "Educator of the Year" nominee should work for an educational institution and have championed the cause of assisting students to attend HBCUs or have gone above and beyond the call of duty to help educate students.

Nominations should be submitted to the National Black College Alumni Reunion, PO Box 69302, Miami, FL 33269.

Celebrate Kwanzaa with Ujima

NEWARK—On Saturday, December 28, several families residing in the Lighthouse Shelter will receive gifts of love, faith, and encouragement during the upcoming Kwanzaa celebration sponsored by the Ujima Mission to Africa.

During the event, participants will be exposed to a variety of cultural food, performances and activities that

dictate Kwanzaa's principles. The event will be held at the UMDNJ Medical Science Building Grand Foyer.

Councilwoman Mildred Crump will join 10 young adults in the distribution of gifts.

Those same individuals have been selected to travel to Africa with the organization in 1997.

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APR	7.500%	APR	7.620%
Maximum Loan	\$1,000,000	Maximum Loan	\$1,000,000
Monthly Pst Per \$1,000	\$6.32	Monthly Pst Per \$1,000	\$5.76
Caps	2% annual 5% lifetime	Caps	2% annual 5% lifetime

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You must use this form or one from City News to nominate a person for the 100 Most Influential. You must identify yourself and a phone number where you can be reached. The 2nd Annual 100 Most Influential will be held May 1, 1997.

Nomination Form

All information is confidential. Deadline is November 26, 1996

Nominee's name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home phone _____ Business phone _____ Fax _____

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Nominee Categories: Please check one category

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic & Community Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Minority Business Enterprise | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Community Involvement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment & Sports | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics, Law & Government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health, Science & Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Media, Arts & Culture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religion | <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Rights |

NATION

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Affirmative action opened the door, talent made them 'boss'

By Jennifer Agwuobi

Growing up in New Orleans in a home with five girls and no boys, the Dickerson sisters learned that there is nothing a girl can't do. "We played with dolls and trucks," said Terri Dickerson, 39, executive director of American Women in Radio and Television in McLean, VA. "When you live in a house with all girls, you don't have those traditional roles. We had to do everything including mowing the lawn," she said.

Today, the Dickerson girls are all grown up and each successfully head mainstream companies and programs in the Washington, DC-metropolitan area. They credit their successes to affirmative action which removed racial barriers, and their parents who taught them to never let anyone tell them they are not worthy to receive the best.

Terri recalled the first grade when she and two of her sisters, Lisa and Patricia, attended Catholic school during the school's first year of integration. "No one wanted us there," she recalled, "not even the nuns or priest."

Being so young, Terri said she could not understand why she and her sisters had to go to a school where they were not wanted. "Because strong students shouldn't be denied an opportunity to a good education," their father—who is a former director of the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)—explained to them.

Despite the blatant hostility, the Dickerson girls were at the top of their class. From her Catholic school experience, Terri learned that "once you get your foot in the door, talent and intelligence are gender- and color-blind."

The Dickersons had parents who "led by example," recalled Verna, 32, the youngest sister and senior producer of Special Projects for Black Entertainment Television. "Success was always embraced in our home; failure was never an option, said Verna.

Their father, the late Walter M. Dickerson, directed the EEOC for 12 years and later worked as national field director to open EEOC offices in six other states. Their mother, Verna,

was a school teacher who later worked for the Montgomery County Government. They said their mother was a role model to them because she attended college and received a graduate degree during a time when affirmative action didn't exist.

All of the Dickerson women are successful because of their parents' example, their individual talents, and hard work, yet they acknowledge the role affirmative action played in their careers. "Affirmative action gave me the opportunity to show that I had the talent and ability to do the job," said Terri, whose organization advocates for women in the media.

Lauri, 33, owner of a child care business, said affirmative action is still needed because "raising two African-American daughters, I want as many opportunities available to them

as is available to anyone else. I want my children to see many black role models. I want them to see African-American doctors when I take them to the hospital," she said.

Of the other Dickerson children, Lisa, 40, is the President of Airports Management, Inc., and Patricia, 38, is the Chief of Staff at DC General Hospital.

All five Dickerson women said they are "only too familiar with the look of surprise when people mistake our white colleagues for the 'boss' in situations. They don't see black women as decision-makers and team leaders... White colleagues who work with us come to learn that we are in our positions because we are prepared and capable... Affirmative action is still necessary and must continue," all five women reiterated.

A consortium of legal women called Americans for a Fair Chance, is fighting to preserve affirmative action. The Consortium has launched a public awareness campaign on affirmative action and has produced a nationwide public service announcement that airs on black-owned radio stations.

Americans for a Fair Chance is comprised of prominent women from the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Women's Law Center, and the Women's Legal Defense Fund.

"Affirmative action these days just makes competitive sense," said Terri, mother of a 12-year-old son. In applying that to journalism, she said, "you want to be

first, fair and accurate. But there is no way you can be all of those things with a homogenous staff... Affirmative action causes the industry to cast a wider net to find a more diverse workforce."

Lisa, Terri, Patricia, Lauri, and Verna still talk to each other almost every day. "My sisters are my best friends," said Terri, who is known as the family "spokesperson." "We are diverse ourselves and we learn from each other," she said.

Judging from their successes, they also learned from their father who routinely said, "Don't eliminate yourself, there are enough people out there trying to do it for you." Boy did they listen.

Black workers allege racial discrimination at UPS

OAKLAND, CA. (AP)—Dozens of black drivers for United Parcel Service have accused the company of racial discrimination, saying they've been put on dangerous routes, overlooked for promotions and subjected to harassment.

The drivers were among 500 people who met in Oakland on Saturday to discuss alleged injustices.

Timothy Mapfumo, a 14-year UPS employee, said a supervisor told him that "white drivers can relate to people in the hills better and that black drivers can relate to people in the ghetto."

In addition, Mapfumo said, he bid for a route in April and two of the 20 people selected had less seniority than he has. He also testified that he has paid out of his own pocket for a guard to trail him on dangerous routes.

Moran Wilson, another long-time UPS employee, said he had never been approached about a management position, despite his good performance reviews. He charged that the company puts "racist supervisors

in positions to antagonize black employees."

UPS spokesman Tom Pizutti declined to comment about any specific cases. But he said that UPS "looks forward to working with the NAACP regarding the issues. We are committed to providing a positive atmosphere for our employees."

Shannon Reeves, president of the NAACP's Oakland chapter, said the testimony would be reviewed by Saturday's six-member panel, which included three NAACP officials, two union members and one representative of the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The panel members will determine with union officials which issues could be solved through collective bargaining. The remaining issues would be presented to UPS managers next month.

Saturday's session was called after four black UPS workers sought help from the NAACP earlier this year after bringing their complaints to the attention of UPS management, union officials and the EEOC.

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EDITORIAL

School reform remains a dream for some

In the midst of the debate that is raging in New Jersey over public school reform and funding, it still seems that the smallest ones—the children—are once again going to be the ultimate losers in the game.

Children in the state's urban districts are once again caught between an adversarial battle between school administrations and the State Department of Education. The Department has threatened the takeover of Plainfield, and has already taken over Newark, Paterson and Jersey City.

The most important question that must be asked is: Why were these schools allowed to fall to such a substantial point? Would these districts have been allowed to deteriorate to such a level if these districts were not predominantly black and Hispanic? Why is the State now coming in to try to institute a litany of standards on a system that is essentially broken to begin with?

Obviously, the State Department of Education needed to be in on the game from the start—and they were not. Where is the Department's true commitment to the special concerns and needs of the urban school district?

One must also hold accountable those educators in the urban school districts themselves, who have not gone the extra mile for the kids—and others too who have abused the system. The flagrant graft and misuse of funds in some of the urban districts clearly illustrates that the problem exists on all levels.

Now, funding will become even more of an issue for these districts. Governor Whitman's funding proposal will serve to knock the knees right out from under the 1994 Supreme Court decision that required additional resources be devoted to "special needs" districts—funding that is all too critical in helping to ease these troubled districts. But, money alone cannot help the problem.

It is time for the voters/parents to mount a campaign—a wake-up call to educators and politicians alike—demanding what the almighty tax dollar and our government were supposed to ensure—a quality education for all of our kids. Let your elected officials know that they will be held accountable—accountable if they vote to approve Governor Whitman's funding plan, and accountable for the failure to seek real and lasting changes to the educational system.

Holiday season a time for joy—and tragedy

Dear New Jerseyans:

The holiday season is once again upon us. It is a time for warm family gatherings, last-minute shopping and the delighted faces of children. In too many instances, however, it is also a time of tragedy. Some of those dry statistics with which you are constantly inundated have precipitated a seasonal fire alert. They tell us that many more residential fires occur in the winter months. They also show that almost 40 percent of all fire deaths in the home happen during this time of year—and 40 percent of these victims are the very old and the very young.

Just last winter was a devastating example of holiday tragedy. Six young lives, five of them children, were lost in three deadly winter fires in a four-week period. Four of the kids perished in three days. Although others burned, trapped and unconscious victims were rescued and survived, those that didn't will be especially remembered this holiday season.

For their families—and, yes, for those firefighters who pulled them out of burning homes, trying everything they could to do to defray death and keep them alive—they will never be forgotten. Fire Lieutenant Carlton Crawley, one of many firefighters who found and carried out children in two of those night time fires just three days apart, said it all for them: "A lot of us went home that morning and hugged our kids."

What can we do to protect ourselves and our loved ones from what some firefighters call the red devil?

Keep Christmas trees well watered and far away from candles, electrical outlets, radiators, heaters and other potential heat sources. The same goes for combustible holiday decorations. Avoid extension cords and make sure your wiring is in good condition and adequate for the increased load.

Don't use kerosene heaters. They are not only illegal in the City of Plainfield and other municipalities (and their use subject to a stiff fine), they are a very common cause of fires in the home. Where they are legal, proper fueling procedures and stringent maintenance are vital. If not scrupulously maintained, they can also produce deadly carbon monoxide, which is undetectable by the human senses.

An improperly installed and operated wood stove is another all too common fire cause. Such installations require permit inspections.

Long neglected fireplaces are often overused during the holidays. There is nothing like a blazing fire in the hearth to warm the spirit of the season and, if faulty, to set the house on fire. The unsafe practices to watch for here? No screens, blocked chimneys, wood impregnated with hot burning, chimney clogging and ignitable creosote. Also, daily use of the fireplace can cause wood support members hidden in walls to char, ignite and spread flames and toxic smoke throughout the house.

Heating systems, a special cause of winter fires, should be in good working order to cope with the extra demands of the sustained bitter cold. Keep combustibles away from the furnace. Check your flues for tightness. Inspect for fuel leaks. Does your chimney or flue pipes need cleaning? Is it a lot cheaper than the cost of having a fire.

Smoke detectors, inexpensive and easy to install, offer precious minutes in which to get you and your family out of danger. They are more necessary than ever during the holiday season. So are well planned escape routes and practiced fire drills. The kids will think it's fun. And you will be surprised at how many little things go wrong that will require some fire tuning on your part.

A real fire is not the time to plan anything. It is difficult to think straight with smoke and panic making you disoriented. And remember, Dial 911 early. Minutes do count. Plainfield firefighters respond very quickly. And quick reporting of a small fire gets them there that much sooner, when they can do the most good in cutting down on fire damage.

To receive further information on specific fire safety questions, please telephone your Bureau of Fire Prevention. In Plainfield the number is 908-753-3445.

Follow the above guidelines. You will find that you sleep better at night. This winter let's all enjoy the peace and good will of the holy days. Your firefighters wish you a truly happy—and safe—holiday season. We will do our part to try to make it so. Will you do yours?

Charles R. Angione
Deputy Chief of Bureau
for Fire Prevention

U.S. Students not competing globally

by Sharon Khadijah Vincent

The United States may be the world's only "super power" left, but study after study continue to show that U.S. students are not performing at the levels that would reflect this status. In a recent international study, that is supposedly the largest and most accurate to date, American students ranked 28th in math and 17th in science out of forty-one nations that participated. The top three countries in math were: Singapore, Korea and Japan, and in science, Singapore, Czech Republic and Japan.

The Third International Mathematics and Science Study has again put the spotlight on the problems and challenges faced by this country in improving the academic performance of United States students, particularly, in the areas of math and science. As we prepare to enter the 21st century, it should disturb every American that our students fall below steady state in these subjects in these critical and important skill areas.

In order for them to be able to compete in the global world market, our educational system must make substantial, sustained and systematic improvements in how our students learn and master math and science. Failure to address and implement needed changes in the math and science curriculums will mean that there will continue to be fewer and fewer students who are interested or prepared to pursue careers that require knowledge and expertise in these areas.

As technology and science continue to advance, individuals seeking to compete for jobs and other opportunities will fall short, diminishing their potential for advancement in future job markets.

The significant findings of the report were quite different from some of the previous studies, in that reasons often cited for the lag in U.S. students' academic performance in math and science were not attributed to lack of homework, heavy television viewing, or classroom instructional time.

The major problems cited were inferior curriculums in both math and science and teaching styles used by many educators that are ineffective. Concerned citizens and taxpayers all across this country must be demanding to know why, when all the methods that has been spent on teacher training and curriculum development, we are still not seeing the kind of improvement needed in our schools? We need to know why these problems and why systemic changes are still not being realized by significant improvements in students' test scores. Instead, many promises are made, but all too frequently are broken.

The latest study has already sparked debate over the findings. The head of the American Federation of Teachers, Albert Shanker, cited problems of too many interruptions in

classrooms as to why instruction is hampered. Other educators have given excessive absenteeism, classroom disruptions, and too much curriculum material to master, as reasons for why American students are trailing behind in math and science. This debate will continue to go back and forth until interest fades and the next study documents the same problems, and the cycle begins itself again.

Leadership is needed at the national, state and local levels. President Clinton has stated that education will be one of his main priorities in his next administration. It can't happen soon enough! He has stated that support for common math and science curriculums all across the nation. Many educators agree with this viewpoint and still want to see a national curriculum. Still, many others don't support this idea. What's currently in place is not working, and we need to try out some different strategies and techniques.

Those school districts and educational leaders who are achieving success, should be utilized and called on to provide guidance, advice and direction for the country. If a particular model or technique is successful, it would be foolish to ignore it. We don't have to start from scratch because there are many lessons to be learned and a lot of talented individuals and successful institutions who can provide assistance.

Our young people can and must do better in math and science. For a nation that has taken the lead in landing a man on the moon and exploring outer space, we should accept no excuses for not conquering and meeting the challenges right here on earth.

Those who spend so much time on negative criticisms designed to deny opportunities and advancements for the poor and the disadvantaged, have only weakened the country. If the commitment is made to properly educate all children, everywhere, then a lot of locked up potential will be unleashed.

Why do so many blacks oppose affirmative action?

by Earl Ofari Hutchinson, Ph.D.

Many African-Americans called the hiring of Blacks who previously supported the California Civil Rights Initiative, that bans affirmative action in state programs, racial Judas. They believe that the Initiative passed because angry white mobs voted for it; Pete Wilson and Bob Dole pushed it; and the California Republican Party bankrolled it. However, almost unnoticed is that slightly more than one out of four Blacks voted for the Initiative.

The more than 60,000 black votes in support of the Initiative, would have pushed the "no" vote total past 4 million. This would not have been enough to defeat the Initiative, but would have narrowed the margin of defeat. Given the cost challenges, even more political urgency and legitimacy, and perhaps increases the chances of getting an injunction against enforcement of the Initiative and ultimately overturning it.

Many insist that blacks who supported the Initiative were confused by the deceptive language, or were misled by Republican trickery. This is much too simple. Many blacks are convinced that they have achieved their success in business and the professions through hard work, education, and ability.

They agree that affirmative action, like welfare, discourages incentive and unfairly stigmatizes Blacks as social parasites, eternally seeking government hand-outs. They feel insulted that many whites claim they got ahead because they are Black and not because they are competent.

Some younger blacks who did not experience Jim Crow laws, have little knowledge of the civil rights

battles that erased them, and only the fuzziest notion of how affirmative action benefits them. This deepens their feeling that affirmative action laws have little relevance to them.

The anti-affirmative action sentiment among blacks is also fueled by the new wave of conservative black radio commentators, writers, academics and politicians. They oppose affirmative action, welfare, abortion, and government spending programs. They advocate school prayer, more police and prisons, self-help and personal responsibility.

The early warning signs that more blacks are a part of this growing conservative political perspective came during the 1991 debates surrounding Clarence Thomas' Supreme court nomination. A USA Today poll found that nearly half of all Blacks surveyed supported self help and not government quotas.

During the recent presidential election, Haley Barbour, the Republican National Committee Chairman, claimed that 25-45 percent of blacks called themselves "conservative." His low-side estimate closely matches the anti-affirmative action vote by blacks in California.

If blacks are becoming more conservative and more resistant to affirmative action, its because more blacks are prospering. Since the 1970s, there has been a 52 percent increase in the number of black managers, professionals, technicians and government officials.

Nearly one-third of blacks have incomes that exceed \$35,000 annually, and 10 percent have incomes that exceed \$50,000 dollars annually. A sizable percentage of Blacks now claim they are pro-life, pro-school prayer and anti-gun control.

An Open Public Letter from Governor Christine Todd Whitman

On December 4, 1996, Dr. Beverly L. Hall presented to the State Board of Education a five year Strategic Plan for the Newark Public School District. This document provides a blueprint for restoring the effectiveness of Newark's schools. I am writing to the citizens of Newark and to all other New Jersey taxpayers to express my enthusiasm for Dr. Hall's comprehensive plan and bold vision.

As State District Superintendent, Beverly Hall has the knowledge, experience and determination needed to transform this long-range plan into real change in Newark's classrooms. Clearly, Dr. Hall alone cannot restore an educationally bankrupt school system. However, based on Dr. Hall's first seventeen months in Newark, I am very optimistic.

Upon her appointment in the summer of 1995, Dr. Hall directed a massive refurbishing of the city's 82 schools. Along with many other officials that summer, Commissioner of Education Dr. Leo Klagholz and I joined one of Dr. Hall's "painting crews." In less than two months, her administration accomplished what hadn't been done in more than two decades: Newark students returned in the fall to clean, well supplied schools.

From the outset, Dr. Hall recognized that change must involve everyone affected by the system. She therefore organized Core Teams of parents, community members and faculty at each school. She also helped student leaders found "Newark Youth Leadership 2000." One of the students' first efforts was a Town Forum in which Dr. Hall, Commissioner Klagholz and I discussed the district with over 200 Newark high school and middle grades students.

Dr. Hall and Deputy Superintendent Beatrice Collymore also met regularly with parent, church and other local groups. At each meeting, Dr. Hall and her associates invited concerned individuals to help solve the school system's problems. Since then, Dr. Hall has reached out to the community through cable television, church visits, parent handbooks, and public letters. Her December report to the State Board extends the message that all New Jersey residents have a stake in Newark's success.

Dilemma

Continued from page 1

pling with significantly low Standardized Achievement Test (SAT) and High School Proficiency Test (HSPT) scores, cities like New Brunswick, have taken the lead in encouraging students to take advantage of programs that are available to help pass these state required exams.

The district's combined SAT scores were 826 and HSPT scores rose from 37.5 percent in 1994 to 43 percent in 1995. According to district Superintendent Dr. Ronald Larkin, the New Brunswick school system has implemented HSPT readiness classes, tutorial programs, and SAT instructional programs during and after school and on weekends.

"We really encourage our students to participate in these programs. Now what's sad is that some of our youngsters are not taking these classes, not taking college prep classes and still sitting down for SAT's. Their chances are certainly hampered by not taking advantage of the programs."

Despite Larkin's disappointment in the test scores, he is encouraged by the technological initiatives the district is implementing. Spending \$180,000 on two additional computer labs, linked to the Internet, and software geared toward biology, calculus

Under the banner of "Putting Children First," her plan redirected over \$26 million from excessive personnel to instructional programs for students. As the State's chief executive, I know that this was a self-searching, difficult decision for Dr. Hall to make. Dismissing over 600 employees, most of whom live in Newark, would certainly cause pain, even if some could be rehired or helped to find new jobs. Maintaining things as they were would have been painless to the System's adults, including Dr. Hall. She decided to act on behalf of Newark's children.

It would have been wrong to continue wasting education dollars to pay bus attendants \$220 per day when the regional average is \$230 to \$335 per day. It would have been wrong to continue employing so many cafeteria personnel that a school lunch in Newark costs \$4.07, twice the national average of \$1.96 per meal. And it would have been wrong to continue supporting custodial services that cost 36 percent above the regional average, when these employees clean 20 percent fewer square feet and miss work 23 percent of the time. Dr. Hall weighed the benefits of wasteful employment against educational programs for children and made the correct choice.

Each piece of Newark's Strategic Plan is necessary, none by itself is sufficient to get the job done. Together they offer a workable solution to a daunting problem: how to fix a broken \$500 million school system that fails to educate children. I am excited about Newark's Strategic Plan and I am confident that those who so thoughtfully planned this work to end our long conscientious work their plan.

That progress is being made in Newark is already evident. Commissioner Klagholz and I recently visited one of the City's new kindergarten classes to tour or supervise the benefits of dollars reallocated to instruction. Underwritten in part by the Prudential, the Victoria, and the Geraldine L. Rodgers Foundations, these exciting model classrooms serve as resource and staff development centers for the 64 full-day kindergartens opened this year.

After her State Board presentation last week, I met with Dr. Hall and representatives of the recently formed Newark Advocates Group. Included in this delegation were representatives of The Prudential Foundation who've \$1.5 million contribution last year launched "The Fund for Excellence in the Newark Public Schools." These business, community, parent, student, and education leaders strongly support Newark's Strategic Plan and are committed to making it work. Their message was clear: "If we all pull together, Newark can become an outstanding school district."

In my opinion, Newark now has the necessary ingredients to succeed: the right leader, a solid plan and committed partners. Through this open letter, I wish to recognize the progress made thus far under the leadership of Dr. Beverly Hall and her dedicated team. I also want to encourage all New Jersey citizens and especially members of the Newark educational community to "pull together." Not succeeding is simply not an option. The future of over 47,000 Newark public school students hangs in the balance.

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YOUTHBEAT

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Kids Kalendar

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18

JERSEY CITY—The Hudson City Branch of the Jersey City Public Library will host a story hour graduation party featuring "Tori the Clown," at 10:30 a.m. for pre-schoolers who attended the fall series. For more info call 201-547-4556.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19

PLAINFIELD—The Plainfield Public Library will host a "Young Peoples' Film Program," at 3:30 p.m. For more info call 908-757-1111.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20

JERSEY CITY—The Pearsall Branch of the Jersey City Public Library will host "Fotó the clown, performing magic tricks, face painting and more for kids, beginning at 3:30 p.m. For more info call 201-547-4557.

THROUGH DECEMBER 21

METUCHEN—The Forum Theatre starts off its 1996-97 Kids Forum Season with "The Dangerous Christmas of Red Riding Hood" at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. For more info call 908-548-0582.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21

ROSELLE—Skate with Santa at Wannisco Skating Center on Thompson Avenue, from 1 to 3 p.m. Cost for adults is \$2. Seniors with ID pay \$4.25, and kids 17 and under pay \$4. Skate rental is \$2. For more info call 908-527-4900.

PLAINFIELD—The Plainfield Public Library will host "Storytime with Tracey Robinson," at 11:00 a.m. For more info call 908-757-1111.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 23

JERSEY CITY—The Miller Branch of the Jersey City Public Library will host "Fotó the clown, performing magic tricks, face painting and more for kids, beginning at 4:00 p.m. For more info call 201-547-4551.

THROUGH DECEMBER 27

WOODBRIDGE—The Barron Arts Center is hosting an extensive exhibit of model trains, entitled "Trains, Trolleys and Tracks." The large display of over 300 feet of track will include a holiday theme, and Santa and Mrs. Claus pumping a hand car. For more info call 908-634-0413.

THROUGH DECEMBER 31

PLAINFIELD—The Plainfield Public Library will hold a Teddy Bear Exhibit during regular library hours. For more info call 908-757-1111.

World On Ice features The Spirit of Pocahontas



Celebrating the natural harmony of life, Walt Disney's *World On Ice—The Spirit Of Pocahontas*. Walt Disney's *World On Ice—The Spirit Of Pocahontas* plays Madison Square Garden January 15 to 19, Continental Airlines Arena from January 21 to 26, and Nassau Coliseum from January 28 to February 2.

The enchanting production features the brave and compassionate Powhatan princess, Pocahontas, who befriends John Smith, a courageous British soldier.

Their paths cross in the tumultuous convergence of the New and Old Worlds. Aided by the ever-wise Grandmother Willow, the mischievous raccoon Meeko, and the cheeky hummingbird Piti, Pocahontas finds she must choose between tradition and a destiny that's all her own.

Tickets are available at all Ticket Master locations and arena box offices. For TicketMaster Charge by Phone call 212-307-7171, 201-307-8900, 212-454-3388.

Sports legends visit Newark

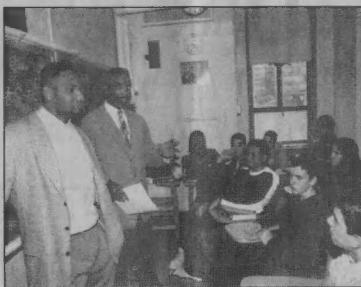
NEWARK—Wide-eyed school children throughout Newark and surrounding communities were completely absorbed in what they heard on December 2 and 3 as some of the greatest names in sports history recapped their personal experiences. Seventeen athletes visited 14 schools over the two-day period, carrying a trio of important messages: Stay in school, stay off drugs and stay away from gangs.

Sponsored by the Newark YMCA, the visit of "Sports Legends" is an annual event that brings retired football, basketball and baseball players, as well as wrestlers and bodybuilders from all over the country to address Newark-area school children. The athletes' time is all donated, and transportation, lodging and meals are paid for in part by the Sports Legends Black Tie Affair that follows the two days of school visits.

Although revenues from the dinner and sports memorabilia auction are currently insufficient to cover expenses, YMCA President Milton Harrison remembers when corporate sponsorship allowed him to actually apply proceeds from Sports Legends to other Y programs throughout the year.

"We once had extensive support from Robert Plant Corporation prior to their sale. Now, thankfully, PSE&G has picked up a major portion of the tab, but we're still actively soliciting further corporate sponsorship," he said.

Why would such famous names as Stu Voight, Chuck Foreman, Bobby Reed, Hall-of-Famer Bobby Bell and their peers donate their valuable time? Bill Grant, a former Mr. America and Mr. World who now resides in nearby Maplewood, said, "I am a product of the YMCA system. I first began lifting weights at the Orange YMCA... Having been mentored and encouraged by the Y in my youth, I feel a responsibility to give something back to that organization."



Amad Field (l) and John Gilliam address a class at Science High. The school is the first to participate in the fledgling program that led to the current annual Sports Legends' affair.



Sandy Stephens (c) the first black quarterback at a major American University (Minnesota), signs autographs at Science High. He is accompanied by Milton Harrison (r) president of the Newark YMCA.

Plainfield Library conducts book amnesty program

PLAINFIELD, NJ—The Grinch certainly won't be stealing Christmas this year—at least in Plainfield The Plainfield Public Library is declaring an amnesty on unreturned and overdue items from December 23rd through December 31st.

Any and all unreturned books, videos, audiotapes or other items may be returned without any fines or penalties during this period.

To ease the embarrassment that many people feel about returning long-overdue items, Vivian Bose, head of the library's circulation department, has decided that the outdoor bookdrops, normally out of operation when the Library is open, will be kept operational day and night throughout

the amnesty period.

"We feel this amnesty is in keeping with the holiday spirit," says Bose, "and look forward to the return of many popular and irreplaceable items."

The last amnesty period, in the summer of 1995, brought in about four hundred books and other items, many of which could not have been replaced as they are out of print.

Those who are considering returning items should not forget to check their children's bookshelves. Bose suggests, Children's books are a large part of those not returned in any given year, and sometimes they are simply mixed in with the child's own books and overlooked.

Guide to top HBCUs available for college-bound students

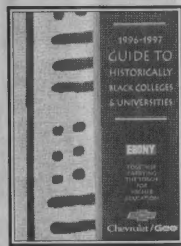
WARREN, MI—The Chevrolet Motor Division and *Ebony* magazine have teamed up, for a second year to produce and distribute the *1996-1997 Guide to the Nation's Top Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, a comprehensive reference book for college-bound African-American high school students and their parents.

More than 100,000 guides have been distributed free to leading church congregations and major African-American organizations across the country.

"Chevrolet realizes that education is one of the most important issues facing our country today," said Chevrolet General Manager John G. Middlebrook. "Choosing a college can seem like an overwhelming and complicated process, and often still."

Ebony magazine is responsible for the research and editorial content of the college guide, which is featured in the magazine's November issue, now on newsstands.

"In order to distinguish yourself from the crowd, you have to be better prepared than anyone else," said John H. Johnson publisher chairman and CEO of *Ebony's* parent, the Johnson Publishing Co. "A quality education can be the cornerstone of success. The 120-page guide includes in-



formation on choosing a college and how to apply for admission and financial aid. Eighty-eight colleges and universities are profiled in state-by-state groups.

Another section introduces some of the schools' famous alumni. The booklet also includes a listing of scholarships and eligibility requirements.

In addition to distribution through high schools, the *1996-1997 Guide to the Nation's Top Historically Black Colleges and Universities* is available directly from Chevrolet by calling 1-800-201-9571.

SAT prep book aids students

Now through June 7, 1997, over 1.5 million students nationwide will take the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), the gateway into most American colleges. Anyone who has endured this three-and-a-half-hour exam knows all too well how tough it is to prepare for, and how stressful the experience can be.

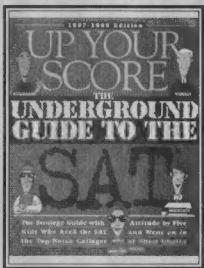
Students everywhere can learn how to master this dreaded exam with *UP YOUR SCORE: The Underground Guide to the SAT/1997-1998* Edition (Workman; \$8.95) an intelligent, savvy guide originally written in 1987 by four high school seniors, each of whom received a perfect score on the SAT.

Each new edition is guest-edited biennially by a high school student who has received a 1550 or higher on the SAT. For the 1997-1998 edition, the guest editor is Lisa Exler who will be a freshman at Brandeis University this coming fall. As a high school junior, Lisa interviewed previous guest editor Michael Cohen for her local newspaper. Inspired by the interview, she read the book and achieved a perfect score of 1600.

The only test preparation book written for students by students, *UP YOUR SCORE* combines educationally sound test-taking strategies with a hip, humorous tone, making this book easy to comprehend and an essential study tool.

In the 1997-98 edition, Lisa has updated the book to reflect the latest changes to the SAT, added current cultural references and new vocabulary words.

She has also contributed her personal system for tackling the critical reading passages—keeping the balance between the need for speed and comprehension, and section on "getting in gear"—how to make yourself sit down and study.



Readers will also benefit from suggestions on how to be a better guesser (and why it's almost always better to guess than not to answer a question), how to master insider math tricks, and what to do if they have a nasty proctor.

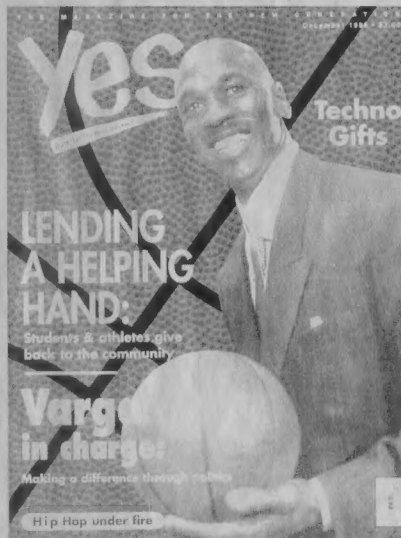
UP YOUR SCORE provides the tactics, techniques and attitude high school students need to psych out the SAT, and pours on humor to make the geometry problems go down easier. Most importantly, *UP YOUR SCORE* teaches students to think like the SAT.

It's hard to know the answer to every question, but test-takers can learn to eliminate choices and gain a better chance of getting the question right. All five authors share their invaluable tricks for remembering difficult words and theorems while including lighthearted jokes to ease the stress of the test.

From preparation tips to advice on how to master each section of the test, to a brand-new chapter on translating high scores into scholarship money, *UP YOUR SCORE* is packed with cutting-edge information. Written in a style that's accessible and entertaining, it provides everything students need to know to ace the test.

Have a safe and Merry Christmas and Happy Kwanzaa

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GLORY STORIES



"Out with the old and in with the new," is a common phrase this time of year. Although there is merit to that, some traditions are far too ingrained to simply dismiss. So this, we mean the tradition of the "good luck" foods on New Year's Day.

For many generations, people have cooked blackeyed peas, a pot of greens and pork on New Year's Day. Beginning as a Southern tradition, this custom is now prevalent throughout the United States. Eating these foods on New Year's Day supposedly ensures a healthy and prosperous year. Blackeyed peas bring luck, greens protect financial matters, and pork ensures good health. Of course, most people today cook these foods as a tasty

Since this is New Year, perhaps it's time to try something a bit more bold. By all means, keep your chutneys on the stove, but add a stunning crown roast of pork as the centerpiece. It's really much easier to prepare than you looks. Your butcher will tie the roast and all you have to do is let it cook slowly. To complement the roast, try our recipe for *Hoppin' John*, using **Glory Foods Pre-Seasoned Blackeye Peas**, add **Glory Foods Pre-Seasoned Mixed Greens** and **Glory Foods Corn Muffin Mix** to finish your meal. Start your diet the day after New Year's Day and bake the chess pie (custard pie) with the recipe that follows. It's fabulous with Champagne!

Finish your list of resolutions and do yourself a favor by resolving to spend less time in the Kitchen. Use

Method

1. Order roast at least one day in advance from butcher. Trim excess fat.
2. Rub seasonings on bottom and inner core of roast. Remove the excess fat and cartilage from the exposed bones with a sharp knife. Wrap each bone with foil to lessen browning.

Method

1. In a saucepan, pour red wine and reduce by half. You may start with 1 cup of water instead of wine. Do not reduce if using water.
2. Add fruit and sugar and cook until syrupy, about 10-15 minutes. Serve warm or room temperature with the crown roast.

Until Next Month
Good Cooking!

YOUR MOM GOT THE PRAISE...



NOW YOU CAN
HAVE THE GLORY.

Who can forget the taste of Mom's home cooking? It's a taste that went right to your soul.

Mom's special mixture of seasonings gave every dish a taste all its own and it's a taste you'll always remember. Now, when you can't get home and you long for the taste of Mom's home cooking, reach for Glory Foods. Glory Foods conveniently packaged, pre-seasoned side dishes, lets you give your family the taste of yesterday's down-home cooking, today.

GLORY FOODS
Just About

Glory Foods variety of canned Southern-style Greens, Beans and Peas, seasoned and accented with the flavor of home-style cooking lets you prepare a quick and delicious meal in minutes. You just heat them and eat them!

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CHITTERLINGS IN PUFF PASTRY

[illegible]

ARTZ WEDNESDAY

New Edition to perform at MSG

Keith Sweat and Blackstreet join season's hottest tour



Keith Sweat



New Edition

ST. LOUIS—Now that they've reunited, Ralph, Ricky, Ronnie, Michael, Johnny and Bobby—otherwise known as New Edition—will hit the road in a nationwide tour as "Budweiser Presents New Edition."

The New Edition crew, one of the most successful acts in the 1980s before individual members launched solo careers, will kick-off the long-awaited tour in their hometown of Boston on December 27, at the Worcester Centrum Center. The tour will come to Madison Square Garden on Friday, January 10, 1997.

Joining Budweiser-sponsored New Edition Reunion Tour will be Keith Sweat, the charismatic singer, songwriter and producer in a limited

number of appearances and soul group Blackstreet.

Since their reunion and the release of the critically-acclaimed *Home Again* CD, New Edition has recaptured the loyalty of their R&B fans, while expanding their audiences to include fans of pop and hip hop.

Buoyed by the success of *Hi Me Off*, which entered the *Billboard* music charts as No. 1, New Edition is gearing up to give concert-goers a matured, redefined look, while maintaining those smooth, trademark harmonies and soulful performances that made them icons of the 1980s.

The group's latest single, "I'm Still In Love With You"—rising up the charts and validating their cinematic

vision of New Edition.

Blackstreet, building on the success of its self-titled 1994 debut CD, is back on the scene with *Another Level*. Led by Teddy Riley, the much-heralded composer, producer and singer, Blackstreet is soaring with the success of the smash hit, *No Diggity*.

Keith Sweat, who is back with his fifth recording, titled *Keith Sweat*, is striving to match his earlier success that moved a music critic to dub him as "the Luther Vandross of the hip hop generation."

Sweat is living up to the accolade as indicated by the success of *No body*, a sultry, seductive duo with newcomer Athena Cage. For ticket information call MSG Box Office or TicketMaster.

Poet Torrence-Thompson on national book tour

NEW YORK—Poet Juanita Torrence-Thompson is on a national book tour for *Spinning the Years*, her second book which appears in *Ebony* Magazine December 1996.

Torrence-Thompson has read her poetry in Singapore as well as on U.S. TV, radio and at libraries, bookstores, coffee houses, schools, churches and prestigious universities like Georgetown, Howard, Fordham and Pace. She is the recipient of poetry awards including Editors Choice Awards. The Nashville Newsletter Poetry Award and won first prize in The New York Public Library contest for her poem "The Evening I Met Barbara Jordan," which is in her first collection *Wings Span to Eternity*.

She recently read from *Spinning the Years* at the nation's Number 1 public library: Broward County Public Library (Main Branch) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and at Ely High School in Pompano Beach, Florida.

"It was an honor to read at both venues," says Torrence-Thompson, "but it was particularly rewarding to experience the spontaneous enthusiasm of the students and teachers. Like in the



Brockton Massachusetts schools, the students lined up for my autograph, which was not only heartwarming, but totally unexpected. So you see, our students really do appreciate culture."

Check bookstores for *Spinning the Years*, or, for autographed copies, write: Tordere Publishing Company, PO Box 751205, Forest Hills, NY 11375.

Actor Howard Rollins dies



starring roles in the 1984 classic *A Soldier's Story* where he portrayed an Army Intelligence Officer investigating the murder of a soldier, and *Ragtime* in 1981 where he played Coalhouse Walker, a proud piano player who becomes a vengeful revolutionary.

Although a talented actor, Rollins was plagued by the ghost of drug addiction. This problem repeatedly got him in conflict with the law and eventually caused him to lose his role on *In The Heat of The Night*.

Costar Carroll O'Connor released a statement noting, "I am deeply saddened by Howard's death. He was a friend whom we loved dearly."

Rollins' last work was *Harambee*, a family-oriented film about Kwanzaa and the effects of violence on communities, which airs nationwide on December 19.

Looking for something to do New Years Eve?

PLAINFIELD—The Plainfield Area Youth Development Tennis Association is sponsoring a New Year's Eve Tennis Party from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. at the Inman Racquet Club in Edison.



Tickets are on sale for \$45 (players) and \$35 (nonplayers), or 755-0464.

There will be tennis, games, music, dancing, food, and door prizes.

All proceeds will benefit the junior development tennis program. For further information, call 908-755-7673

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AZ Yet set for stardom

There are five young men from Philadelphia, who have begun to capture the attention of music critics, the music industry, and music enthusiast. And if predictions hold true, they are well on their way to making the same mark as another well known group from Philadelphia.

Who are these soon to be phenoms? They are Az Yet. With their tight and infectious harmonies, diverse vocal styles and extraordinary musical talents—Az Yet—the Rhon Allen, Darryl Anthony, Marc Nelson, Shawn Rivera, and Kenny Terry), is poised to take the public by storm when they share their vocal gifts on their soon-to-be-released debut album on LaFace Records.

The group is already enjoying the critical acclaim being garnered on their debut single *Last Night*. The single hit #1 on the *Billboard* R&B chart and was on the original motion picture soundtrack from the hit movie *The Matrix*.

There were three people who realized, early-on, that Az Yet, with the right direction, development and focus could become one of a like the most popular singing groups ever to come along.

These three were Jacqueline McQuam, Michael McQuam and award-winning singer, song writer, producer Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, who has produced and penned the majority of songs on Az Yet's debut album.

Says Babyface, Az Yet is one of the most talented groups to ever come along. When they sing, it becomes magic. This group is destined for success. Not only can they sing, but they



Az Yet From left: Dion, Kenny, Marc, Shawn and Darryl.

also write, produce and arrange. Az Yet is unique in that their mix of influences and flavor defies labeling. Tagged to be associated with them.

How did these five young men come together to form such a one-of-a-kind sound? Shawn and Dion met in early 1990. Both sang, shared a love for music, and wanted to form a singing group. They decided to "go for it" and began combining the city of Philadelphia for other vocalists who wanted to make it as they did.

Their lives changed forever when a self-produced demo reached the hands of Los Angeles businesswoman Jacqueline McQuam.

"I was so impressed with their demo tape. I called them and arranged to meet with them in Philadelphia," says McQuam.

"When I got there, they did a nine-song showcase for me in my hotel room and I was sold."

McQuam signed a contract with the group and immediately began shopping their demo and seeking other opportunities for them.

One of the individuals who heard the group's music, via showcase, was McQuam's son-in-law, Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds (married to Jacqui's daughter Tracey). And, as it is said, "The rest is history."

The group is excited about their first album and being part of "a family of five" as Shawn says. Kenny sums it up, "God introduced us to each other for a reason. We look forward to using the talents he gave us to perform and make as many people happy as we can."

Seasons
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all. May the
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bring with it
great gifts of
love, hope
and
happiness.

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Billboard

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18
NEW YORK—The Annual Choral Council presentation of Handel's *Messiah* Sing-in at Avery Fisher Hall Lincoln Center at 8 p.m. For more info call 212-333-3333

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19
NEW YORK, NY—Manny's Car Wash, a blues club, presents guitarist Matt "Guitar" Murphy. For more info call 212-369-BLUE.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20
NEW YORK, NY—Manny's Car Wash, a blues club, presents The Blue Blues Band. For more info call 212-369-BLUE.

NEW YORK, NY—The National Choral, under the baton of Music Director Martin Jorssen, present Handel's *Messiah*. For more info call 212-333-3333

DECEMBER 20 & 21
NEW YORK, NY—Schubert Center presents NATIVITY—A Life Story. Inspired by Langston Hughes' *Black Nativity*. A brilliant retelling of the Biblical Christmas story with African-American music and dance. Showtime is 7 p.m. both and showtimes. For tickets call 212-491-2205.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21
CHERRY HILL—Big Band Jazz at the Cherry Hill Hilton, featuring The Rhythm Machine, a sixteen-piece band. Doors open at 7 p.m., and the show begins at 8 p.m. The Hilton is located on Rt. 70 opposite the Garden State Parkway. For more info call 609-665-6666.

NEW BRUNSWICK—If Young Productions presents a Toy Drive Holiday Bash at Cheddar's Cabaret, 10 Livingston Ave. (across from the state Theatre). Party with Live Jazz on the upper level and music on the lower from 8:30 'til Admission is \$5 with toy, \$10 without. For more info call 908-545-0024.

NEW YORK, NY—Manny's Car Wash, a blues club, presents The Susan Tedeschi Band. For more info call 212-369-BLUE.

DECEMBER 21 & 22
NEW BRUNSWICK—American Repertory Ballet presents *The Nutcracker*. Showtimes are 2 and 7:30 p.m. on the 21st and 1 and 4:30 p.m. on the 22nd. For tickets call The Theatre's box office at 908-246-7459.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22
NEW YORK—Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center presents solo pianist George Winston. Showtime at 8 p.m. For more info call 212-721-6500.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26
NEW YORK, NEW YORK—Manny's Car Wash, a blues club, presents Josh Winkler and the Rhon Cats. For more info call 212-369-BLUE.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27
NEWARK—A Kwanzaa festival will be held at Symphony Hall, featuring music and dance. For more info call 1-800-JERSEY-7.

THRU DECEMBER 28
NEW BRUNSWICK—Sing A Christmas Song will preview at the Garden State Playhouse, 9 Livingston Ave. For ticket info call 908-246-7777.

THRU JANUARY 5
NEW BRUNSWICK—Crossroads Theatre presents *The American Corner* by James Alan McPherson. For more info call 908-246-5581.

BROOKLYN—The Billie Holiday Theatre presents *Acres of Diamonds*. For more info call 718-638-0918.

MONDAYS THROUGH DECEMBER
CHERRY HILL—Big Band Jazz at the Cherry Hill Hilton every Monday, featuring The Rhythm Machine, a sixteen-piece band. Doors open at 7 p.m., and the show begins at 8 p.m. The Hilton is located on Rt. 70 opposite the Garden State Parkway. For more info call 609-665-6666.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29
NATIONWIDE—The NATURE channel will offer the televised show "Designed for Living," a program on structures built by animals — from bird nests to mole tunnels. The show will air at 8 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 30
NEW YORK, NEW YORK—Manny's Car Wash, a blues club, presents The Duke Robillard Band. For more info call 212-369-BLUE.

NEW YEAR'S EVE
NEW BRUNSWICK—Celebrate New Year's Eve in style at The State Theatre with the timeless music of Irvin Berlin in the play *Purtillo on The Ritz* at 8 p.m. For tickets call 908-246-7459.

THROUGH MARCH 23, '97
NEW YORK—The Museum of the City of New York presents "Back in the Days: East Harlem Old and Young," a New York City Community Gallery Exhibition. For more info call 212-534-1672.

THROUGH MARCH 30, '97
PHILADELPHIA, PA—"Moments Without Proper Names," an exhibition of 811 black and white photographs by Gordon Parks at the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum. For more info call 215-574-6380.

Got news? We want to hear it. Call us at 908-753-3000 or fax story ideas to 908-753-1036

Business Calendar

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18
NEWARK—The Regional Business Partnership invite all to celebrate the holiday season by taking a Victorian Tour of Newark Museum's Ballantine House, from 9 to 3 a.m. For more info call 201-242-6237, extension 225.

SUMMIT—The Career Options Center is sponsoring a networking/supervisory seminar at the Summit YWCA, 79 Maple Avenue, on the third Wednesday of each month. Registration is required. For more info call 908-756-3636.

THROUGH DECEMBER 19
JERSEY CITY—Hudson County Community College's Department of Continuing Education will present a course entitled "Marketing Methods for the Travel Industry." The 3-session course begins on December 12, and runs through December 19. The course is a part of a program leading to a Travel Counselor Certificate. For more info call 201-714-2107.

ANNAPOLIS, MD—The National Association of Minority Contractors will present an educational training workshop on underground storage tanks. The workshop will be held at the Holiday Inn. For more info call 202-347-8259.

MONDAY, JANUARY 13
NEW BRUNSWICK—The Middlesex Chapter of the New Jersey Association of Women Business Owners will hold its chapter dinner meeting at the New Brunswick Hyatt Regency at 5 p.m. Reservation for this dinner meeting are due by January 8. For more info call 908-940-6880.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, '97
RARITAN—The Tribute to Women and Industry (TWI) Program of Central New Jersey announces its "Women in Management" discussion group series. The Orto McNeil Pharmaceutical discussion group on the topic "Issues Affecting Women in a Global Corporate Environment" will be at 1000 U.S. Highway 202. Registration is required. For more info call 908-756-3636.

THROUGH MARCH '97
NEW YORK, NY—New York University's School of Continuing Education is offering free Career Guides and Open Houses, providing an insider's look at more than 30 career areas from multimedia technology to arts administration. Inquiries are welcome to the business of enrollment. For more info call 212-998-7080.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26
RARITAN—The Tribute to Women and Industry (TWI) Program of Central New Jersey announces its "Women in Management" discussion group series. The Orto McNeil Pharmaceutical discussion group on the topic "Issues Affecting Women in a Global Corporate Environment" will be at 1000 U.S. Highway 202. Registration is required. For more info call 908-756-3636.

NJ unemployment rate declined in October

TRENTON—New Jersey's unemployment rate declined to 6.1 percent in October from September's rate of 6.2 percent.

"New Jersey's economy continued to strengthen and expand in October," said Labor Commissioner Peter J. Caldarone. "For the fourth straight month, the New Jersey workforce reached a record level of over 4.1 million workers and our employment numbers continue to steadily improve. The actual number of jobholders in our state is at its highest point in six years."

Caldarone said the labor force participation rate (the percentage of the civilian population working or looking for jobs) in October was 66.3 percent, the highest level since July, 1992.

According to preliminary tabulations from the Labor Department's monthly survey of employers, the number of persons working in the

Garden State rose by 1,100 from September to a seasonally adjusted level of 3,649,200 in October.

The October employment level was the highest since June, 1990. Discounting the blizzard-related employment decline in January, 1996, employment has risen each month since June, 1995.

New Jersey continued to outperform its large neighbors in job creation since coming out of the last recession. New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania have seen nonfarm jobholding increase by 3.2 percent, 4.2 percent and 4.4 percent from their respective recessionary low points through September, 1996 (the latest month for which comparable data is available). New Jersey's nonagricultural wage and salary employment rose by 5.9 percent from its low point in May 1992 to September of this year.

SBA Disaster loans available

NEWARK—Individuals, businesses and renters who suffered uninsured or underinsured losses of damages as a result of October's Atlantic coastal storm are eligible for low-interest disaster loans through the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

Loans to repair or replace physical damage to homes, rented property and businesses of all sizes are available to residents of Hudson, Middlesex, Morris, Somerset and Union counties. Small businesses in nearby Bergen, Essex, Hunterdon, Mercer, Monmouth, Passaic, Sussex and Warren counties are eligible to apply for Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL's), which are working capital loans.

"Individuals are urged to apply for disaster assistance even if they have already claimed up damages from the storm," said Tom Betttridge, SBA Regional Administrator. "Damage to homes, businesses, and personal property as a result of the

severe weather conditions on October 19-20, 1996 can be repaired or replaced with assistance from the SBA's disaster loan program at a very low interest rate."

Individuals affected by the storms are reminded they must first register for all types of disaster assistance by calling the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Telereregistration Center (NTC) at 1-800-462-5029. SBA representatives have established SBA Disaster Workshops where individuals and business owners can obtain information regarding SBA's disaster loan program, and receive assistance with their SBA disaster loan application.

SBA Disaster Workshops are currently being offered in New Jersey at two centers. The first center is located in Somerset at the Old County Administration Building, at 40 North Bridge Street. The other location is in Edison, at the Seltzer Community Center at 328 East Plainfield Road.

The Workshops run Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. until further notice.

The SBA offers loans of up to \$200,000 to repair damaged homes, and up to \$40,000 to replace personal belongings, including automobiles. Loans of up to \$150,000 are available to businesses and non-profit organizations to repair business premises and property.

Although SBA loans cannot be used to upgrade homes, additional funds are available for the protection from or the mitigation of future damage of the same type. Economic Injury Disaster Loans are also available to help small businesses that incurred financial difficulties due to the disaster, allowing them to pay bills and meet expenses.

Interest rates for SBA disaster loans are as low as 4 percent, with terms up to 30 years. Actual loan amounts and terms are set by the SBA, based on each applicant's financial situation.

Anheuser salutes Ebony



John H. Johnson (left), publisher, chairman and chief executive officer of Johnson Publishing Company, shares a moment with Earl C. Graves (center), publisher of Black Enterprise, and Wayne F. Smith III, vice president of corporate affairs at Anheuser-Busch Companies, during the recent television special to commemorate 50 years of Ebony magazine and journalistic excellence. An all-star cast of celebrities from music, television and film made the special one of the highlights of the television holiday season. The program, supported by Anheuser-Busch Companies, chronicled significant news events and African-American achievements covered by Ebony magazine over the past half century. Proceeds from the salute, held at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, benefit The College Fund/UNCF.

Entrepreneurial training program honors 48 NJ graduates

NEW BRUNSWICK—Armed with the tools for business success, 48 individuals from the Atlantic City, Jersey City, New Brunswick and Trenton areas recently graduated from an innovative state-sponsored entrepreneurial training program.

The graduates, who learned the basics of owning and operating a business, are now eligible for loans to start up or expand their own businesses.

"Starting a new business is a real challenge. The Entrepreneurial Training Institute (ETI) attempts to smooth the way by linking business skills development with financial support, two critical elements of entrepreneurship," said Prakash A. Shah, chairman of the New Jersey Development Authority for Small Businesses, Minorities' and Women's Enterprises, which administers the training program. "This ETI session concentrated on establishing relationships with local development corporations and community groups who are committed to business development activities in our urban communities," he added.

Included in the latest graduating class were 11 individuals from the Atlantic City course; 11 from Jersey City; 13 from New Brunswick; and 13 from Trenton. Since the program's inception, more than 200 individuals have graduated from the program and qualified for \$1.3 million in financing support, according to Shah.

State Commerce Commissioner Gualberto (Gil) Medina congratulated the graduates during special ceremonies held in New Brunswick. "We your businesses, you will be creating jobs and increasing prosperity in your neighborhoods, and across our state," the Commissioner said.

Calling small businesses the "backbone of the state's economy," the Commissioner noted that more

than half of the state's businesses, approximately 130,000 companies, employ fewer than five people.

The Entrepreneurial Training Institute is a state initiative that has expanded into a collaborative effort by private, public and community organizations committed to business development in the state. These groups have formed regional consortiums that consist of staff, facilities and other resources to the program.

Rev. Buster Soaries of the First Baptist Community Development Corporation, Inc. (CDC) in New Brunswick welcomed the graduates. The CDC, which hosted the ETI program, is a not-for-profit group that, with the help of state financing, transformed the former site of the Home News into a center to benefit the residents of New Brunswick and Franklin Township. The center provides an array of services including day-care programs for children and senior citizens, a youth development program for troubled teens and job-training.

Joining Commissioner Medina and Rev. Soaries to express their support for the entrepreneurial development effort and graduates were: New Brunswick Mayor James M. Cahill, Franklin Township Mayor Kimberly Francois and Rev. John Harris of Galilee Baptist Church in Trenton.

Plans are being made to hold Entrepreneurial Training Institute sessions in the Spring of 1997 in Long Branch/Asbury Park, Newark/Irvington, Elizabeth and Camden areas, according to Bryan K. Finnie, director of Community Development and Small Business Lending for the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, which administers the programs of the New Jersey Development Authority. Individuals interested in enrolling in the course should contact the Community Development Division at 609-292-1890.

NJ and others reach settlement with America Online

NEWARK—New Jersey and 19 other states have persuaded the Internet carrier America Online (AOL) to change the way it notifies subscribers of its new higher priced rates and to provide automatic refunds for AOL members who do not want the company's more expensive flat-rate plan. Attorney General Peter Verniero and Mark S. Herr, Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs, recently said.

The states' Attorneys General began negotiating with AOL after it announced that it will automatically convert all of its members to the new plan unless they specifically objected prior to their December 1996 billing date.

Prior to December, AOL had charged its users \$9.95 a month for five hours of access, with additional hours billed at \$2.95 each. Under its new flat rate, consumers will be charged \$19.95. New Jersey and other states were concerned that the change was being implemented in a manner that was misleading to AOL members, Verniero said.

AOL agreed to cooperate with New Jersey and the other states in order to protect its members from any adverse consequences of the change. Verniero said. "This agreement satisfactorily protects New Jerseyans who use AOL," Verniero said. "It builds in safeguards for our citizens to allow them to choose the plan they want."

FTC warns of business schemes

WASHINGTON, DC—Want to be your own boss...earning "big" money working part-time? Or, better yet, working from your own home? Don't put a bet on a promise, no matter how tempting it sounds.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the National American Securities Administrators Association (NASAA) have teamed up to warn consumers about "get-rich-quick" schemes as lures to promise easy and fast returns on your investment. Their advice to would-be investors is to do some homework.

Before you invest in any "get-rich-quick" business venture, the FTC and NASAA suggest some simple steps.

Check out the company with the consumer protection agency and Better Business Bureau not only in the state where you live, but also in the state where the company is headquartered. These organizations can tell you if they have any consumer complaints about the company on file.

Ask current owners or employees about their experiences with the company. Do not accept a list of references selected by the company as a substitute for a complete list of franchise or business opportunity owners.

Get all promises in writing. Any promises you have should be written into the contract you sign.

Ask for the details of the company's refund policy before you buy. Get that in writing as well.

Investigate all earnings claims. Talk to others who have purchased the opportunity to see if their experience verifies the claims. Demand to see the company's basis for its claims in writing. Be skeptical in judging whether the claims are backed up.

Listen carefully to sales presentations. Be wary of any opportunity that sounds too good. The thought of "easy money" may be appealing, but success generally requires hard work.

Be wary of buying if company representatives either try to evade your questions or ignore them altogether.

Ask for the disclosure document, if you are investing in a franchise. This document, required by law, should provide detailed information to help you compare one business to another. If the company has no disclosure document, beware!

Ask a lawyer, accountant, or business advisor to read any disclosure documents and proposed contracts. Entering into any business opportunity generally requires a substantial investment.

Resist high pressure sales tactics. Buying a business opportunity is a big, expensive decision. Take time to think it over.

Get free information about buying a business opportunity or franchise without getting scammed, call the FTC at 1-800-554-5760 or visit the FTC web site at www.ftc.gov.

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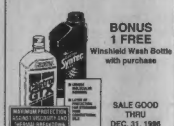
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New Jersey's education dilemma

Continued from page 4

ware geared toward biology, calculus and geometry. Larkin said test results indicate there is achievement.

"If you go up there, the youngsters are working on problems that are so complex, it's amazing to see some of the work that our youngsters are doing."

Larkin said that because of the interest in computer technology, the labs are staffed during lunch hours for the many students that pass up lunch to complete assignments or want to browse the Internet.

"Last year, in anticipation that the core curriculum standards were going to be adopted—we put together curriculum committees, consisting of teachers, administrators, central office personnel, with expertise in the various subject areas to begin aligning the curriculum here in Newark to

the core content standards," said Newark State Superintendent Dr. Beverly Hall.

The Newark district, Hall said, has introduced a strategic plan that outlines specific guidelines to enhance student performance, and offer engaging and challenging curricula.

For instance, adopting standards from Governor Whitman's core curriculum standards, the district has now expanded its Algebra I course for its elementary school students, particularly for eighth grade students.

They have also developed curriculum specifically designed to prepare their elementary students for the HSPIT and SAT exams.

"We have put all of our five year olds in kindergarten, and, as a result, we have 58 additional all-day kindergarten classes," said Hall. "We be-

lieve that this will have a long-term significant impact on student achievement in Newark."

Although many districts have noted improvements in various areas, there exists obstacles that undercut their efforts.

"The initial impact, it appears that we may be losing about 4 million in potential state funding," said East Orange Superintendent Dr. John Howard.

"We would have to make that up at the local level by increasing property taxes if the current plan is implemented." The funding issue is the correlating problem between all of the districts.

Republican Senator Robert Martin's proposal to establish baseline funding for all districts at \$7,200, will continue a spending gap



Plainfield Superintendent Dr. Levertt

between wealthy and poor districts.

But it doesn't impede Dr. Howard's district from continuing its "Unique Schools" program that "is used to drive the curriculum and academic changes."

"Every school has their own theme. You've got a performing arts school, a music school, you've got a science school, each one generates their own theme."

Despite having the lowest student to computer ratio, Howard said that his district still has "telecommunications in three schools, where there's interactive telecommunicating between buildings. We are wired through the schools for the world wide web and the Internet."

The Plainfield district has taken similar approaches of providing technological innovations for its student population. But according to

Plainfield's Superintendent Dr. Larry Levertt, the district is taking an administrative approach at achieving their goals.

"We've been working to re-define the relationship between the unions, administration and school board to utilize more collaborative problem solving strategies, so that we're not stuck in an adversarial mode," said Levertt.

The referendum, is going to make possible a number of educational improvements, ranging from full-day kindergarten for every child in the community, middle schools of choice, improvement of our library facilities at all schools, the availability of art and music facilities, and the introduction of technology throughout the instructional program." Levertt said these were the cornerstones of the district's reform initiatives.

School funding debate heats up

Continued from page 4



Newark Superintendent Dr. Hall

as a detriment to improving her district. The idea of a set and equal amount per student, she believes, would hurt the urban school child the most—the child who may need more in order to be brought up to par with their peers in more affluent districts. Venable sees the school funding proposal as a way for Whitman to deliver on a political promise of lower taxes in the state.

Dr. Columbus Salley, superintendent of the Orange Public Schools, describes the Governor's plan as "ill-conceived" and "an incomplete

conceptualization at best." While he sees the core curriculum plan as "laudable," Salley takes issue with the funding proposal and the flat funding amount for every pupil in every district across the state.

"There is no perfect correlation between the money that you put in, and the results that you get out," he said, in a recent interview with *City News*.

"I think that an inordinate amount of emphasis is on dollars—it is a political issue—it's not an educational issue."

According to Dr. Beverly Hall, superintendent for the Newark Public Schools, her district could lose some \$30 million under the current funding proposal. And, funds available would be more carefully "earmarked" for particular use. "We would have to look at where the cuts would come from," Hall said. She would seek to preserve actual necessities at all costs, regardless of the resulting funding cuts.

The Education Law Center estimates Newark local taxes would have to increase some \$44.9 million in the 1996 to 1997 year, in order to support and maintain the current regular education programs.

The Center estimates a \$4.3 mil-

lion increase in a local levy to maintain current spending levels in the Trenton public schools.

Frank Sinatra, superintendent for the Jersey City Public Schools, said, "If the Governor's plan was going to be implemented, the Jersey City Public Schools would have received enough funds to continue the present programs that we have, but would not enable us to start new initiatives."

According to John Patella, public information officer for the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSEA), the organization is against the current plan—citing its over-reliance on property taxes to support the school system. NJSEA is a federation of more than 600 local boards of education.

Referring to Whitman's plan, Dr. Robert Boose, NJSEA executive director, said, "It's a severe problem. Close to 300 school districts have to tax themselves at rates above the state average to support their schools,

many to an extraordinary degree."

According to the NJSEA, state governments across the nation pay an average of about 50 percent of public school costs. However, according to Governor Whitman's office itself, the state of New Jersey is paying but an estimated 38.5 percent for the 1996 to 1997 academic year. And, New Jersey contributed an estimated 39.1 percent to public school costs in 1995 to 1996, and an actual 37.8 percent in 1994 to 1995—well below national averages for all respective years.

The NJSEA contends that with New Jersey contributing less than the average to public schools, and that funding percentage remaining relatively stagnant over the last three academic years—even in the face of rising costs—property tax increases are the only solution to improving, or even maintaining the schools across the state.

Assemblyman Craig Stanley (D-Essex) agrees with the NJSEA's contention that the decreased funding from the state has created a "downward spi-

ral" in the quality of education.

"That is what is causing the problem for not only urban districts, but middle income districts, as well," Stanley noted.

The idea of increasing property taxes in the thirty "special needs districts" is particularly problematic—problematic for areas that are facing decreasing employment and shrinking tax rates.

In a recent press conference, Governor Whitman bristled at the notion that her administration's current school funding plan would result in a property tax increase or a decrease in funding to education.

"This is the most important issue that this state faces," Whitman noted. "It's the greatest legacy that this administration and this legislature can leave to the future—and that's the education of our children—putting it on a sound financial and core curriculum status. I am extraordinarily disappointed that what we are starting to see in this election year is partisan politics get in the way of what is the

most important discussion that we are having."

Whitman believes that the new formula would put approximately \$260 million more in the school system this next academic year, resulting in total overall spending of \$4 billion. However, Whitman opponents would disagree as to this interpretation.

An Office of Legislative Services study shows local tax increases for a number of districts across the state. Citing the OLS study on her funding plan, Whitman said that the democrats asked OLS to "run numbers using worst case scenario assumptions at every turn." Others, including Assemblyman Stanley, note that the assumptions are conservative, at best.

While a non-partisan office, the OLS was commissioned by the state's Senate and Assembly democrats to complete the study.

Assumptions in the study include the school districts spending at capacity, a five percent statewide property tax increase and a projected enrollment increase of two percent.

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Former New York Giant great Harry Carson (left) and current sensation Michael Strahan trade stories during the Newark YMCA's Sports Legends III black tie dinner.

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